

**Remarks by Student Body Presidents  
CPE Executive Committee Meeting  
March 8, 2006**

**Ryan Quarles:** I sit on the Board of Student Body Presidents as a non-voting member and about once a month we get together. We've been talking about the tuition policy since November. At this point a few of the student body presidents are here to make some comments and I would encourage you to ask some questions about their tuition forums and what the students are thinking on campuses around the state. Overall, I think I can conclusively say that students don't really know about the policy. But the ones that do are glad that the Council is taking steps to provide guidelines on how tuition rates are made in the state. At this point, I'd like to ask the student body presidents who are here to come forward and give us some thoughts about how your tuition forums have gone and the general consensus and feeling on your campuses about tuition this year and in particular if the policy has changed that.

**Jason Marion, Morehead State University.** Thank you all for having us today. At Morehead State we had our annual tuition forum. We've had several for the last four years. It's varied year to year. This year we probably had the most engaging discussion with our administrators at the student administrator level since I've been at MSU. Ultimately, the students understand that they are going to swallow a tuition increase and they understand why they have to. It's a difficult issue, but, in regards for our students and the university to maintain its quality, they understand that tuition increases are inevitably with energy costs rising and just to be able to retain quality faculty and staff. When they are presented with that information, they look at it and say that they really don't want to have to take another tuition increase but at the same time they also understand that for them to have a valuable degree they will need to pay more. There's a tradeoff there. The students who attended our tuition forum were not upset about the range. There was not much discussion actually on the range. More of the issues centered on what you are going to be able to do with more resources. That's what it ultimately comes down to. Students don't want to see tuition increases where they don't know where the money is going. Some of the other things that came out of our tuition discussions dealt with students' concerns about at what point down the road do most MSU students reach that threshold where financial aid is not going to be helpful for them anymore or it's not going to allow them to go to school. When our students are presented with the JBL data and they find out that less than 2 percent of MoSU students spend more than \$4,000 per year, they think they are getting a pretty good deal. And then when they see what our benchmarks are receiving, they say we're getting a pretty deal. But at the same time, they don't want to swallow more tuition increases but they realize that it is a market and MSU's pretty competitive. But the largest portion of our discussion dealt with how we're going to be able to deal with our residence halls. We've got a very aged infrastructure. How are we going to improve the quality of life for our on-campus students? Our on-campus residency has been declining and to correlate with that on-campus residency decline is our full-time enrollment decline. This formula is based on total enrollment – which is a good thing for MSU because our total enrollment has been staying pretty high. It's been dropping slightly but at the same time it hasn't been dropping as much as our full-time enrollment. And that is a critical issue for the tuition policy. Full-time enrollment is very important for us to reach our 2020 goals. Because people are going to take longer to graduate. The students want to see more

students on campus and they want to be able to see some substantial improvements in the residential community – our residence halls, our recreation centers that are specifically tied to our residential community. That stuff is 40 years old. It's not competitive. Our enrollment is slipping just like other institutions that have similar problems. So we want to get our enrollment up. I think two years ago our students paid an additional \$2.2 million which was paid through tuition because of our enrollment declines. We had to make up that gap. It's a difficult street to walk down because we're asking for quality and we're asking for affordability. We'd like to have both but students understand there are tradeoffs. Ultimately, I think the students are pleased that they can go in earlier and they'll have a rough idea of what tuition increases are going to be like. They don't have to worry about that looming threat of a very large increase at the board level without any preparation for it. That adds a lot of merit to the proposal that you have. Lastly, on a personal comment about the tuition policy, I think that we need to still consider looking at the use of the per capita income figure as opposed to median household income just because when you do the regressions – if you ask a social scientist the  $R^2$  value is very important for telling you how much correlation there is. And the correlation between per capita income and baccalaureate degree attainment is substantially more than median household income. You're looking at a 72 percent correlation with per capita income. For median household income, it's in the low 50's. So for other states median household income might work well, but for Kentucky per capita income seemed like it was pretty important. But that was just a personal note. Our students don't talk about that stuff. I looked at the policy pretty extensively and overall my personal take is I think the Council is heading in the right direction. I think you have done some wonderful things and it definitely adds some security for our students to have a good idea of what the tuition will be in the years coming to their graduation. I appreciate all of your time.

**Katie Dawson, WKU.** At WKU we actually have a little bit different situation because our tuition has been set for the next few years. So we don't have a tuition forum coming up. We actually have a student fee forum coming up. The thing that WKU students are seeing is that WKU is concerned about the growth in tuition and the rate that it was rising. So they went ahead and predicted what it's going to be for the next few years. But it still doesn't ensure that we're going to have everything that we need. So, what we've had to do, the administration and the board, is to look at what we have and what we need and ask students to supplement. Right now we have a \$45 fee proposed for three projects going on at WKU. We're going to have a forum about it in the next few weeks with President Ransdell. What I think is not necessarily sad but says a lot about the state funding and the way that tuition has to rise and the way that educational costs keep going up is that students do know that they get to make the decisions at least at WKU about how high the quality will be. The three projects that we have on the table are: (1) a wireless internet project so that we can have wireless access all around our campus; (2) a health services fee – we're in the process of constructing a health services building which has been a very successful program at WKU and not only serves the students, faculty, and staff but also the alumni and even community members. But in order for them to operate that new building, we have to institute this fee. (3) A project that would take care of the HVAC system and expansions on our Fine Arts Center. Right now I'm sure you are aware that our list of priorities is getting a new educational building because of some of the issues they've had in that building regarding the HVAC system and the age of the building. We're trying to prevent that from happening to our Fine Arts Center. What our job has been as students that are informed in student government

is to explain to students how this small fee could help prevent future students from having to pay a larger fee or a bigger increase in tuition if there needed to be another building built. Again, WKU hasn't had the tuition forum because our tuition has pretty much been set. But it's more of just our students realizing that if they want a quality education not only are they going to have to increase a little bit more for tuition but they might be asked to further pay a student fee.

**Bill Brammell, UofL.** I really appreciate the guidelines that you have laid out. I think the stability it adds to the system is very good and I think it will make students feel very good when they understand the system. Now quite frankly, when you talk to students, I'm not going to lie to you and tell you that they know the process behind setting the tuition. What they see is the final number. I think UofL students feel very confident that our administration will do whatever is in its power to keep that number as low as possible without sacrificing the quality of our higher education and the quality of our campus. President Ramsey has done a very good job of incorporating things into the budget that students really need on campus despite the desire probably to keep tuition as low as it possibly, possibly can be without cutting out some of those items. Some of those items have been left in which is very good because you have to have things like health services on campus for students. I think students are very appreciative of that. I guess the majority of frustration that I've seen – and we haven't had our tuition forum yet – hasn't really been directed to the Council. It's been directed towards the General Assembly for not giving more funding to higher education. I think students understand that the cost of education goes up. I think they are just saddened by the fact that it's going to have to be picked up by them. Really, the students I guess I'm most concerned about aren't even the students that are in the university. They're my younger sister who's a sophomore in high school or the students who are juniors and seniors in high school right now. I know at UofL and at all of the colleges across the state we really pride ourselves in the socio-economic diversity that we have amongst our students. I really hope that in the future Kentucky education can remain affordable so that we can have some of those students who have been less privileged in the past. So I really hope that we can hear the voices of the students who are in high school who are going to be living with this system the next few years. But the steps that you have taken to developing and structuring guidelines have been steps in the right direction. And I really appreciate that. I guess we'll keep our fingers crossed on everything in the General Assembly.

**Leonard Clemons, KSU.** Some of the students don't know the steps in which tuition policy are set. I'm not going to say that they know the procedures. For, mostly for the general part, they do know that KSU has tried to within its best efforts to keep the education low at KSU, being one of the lowest percentages in the state in terms of raising its tuition. President Sias has done an excellent job bringing in new master's programs. We have now five graduate programs and we're working on another baccalaureate program. Our nursing program is booming and we're trying to get renovation for our Betty White Health Center. But there are some concerns in tuition policies within the parameters of how much KSU can raise its tuition and cannot raise its tuition. I was reading through some of the documents here. The mandatory fees for KSU are right at \$4,468 but I had a little concern because our health insurance was placed in mandatory fees and those fees are optional. So actually the mandatory fees are cheaper than what they are projected in the tuition policy documents. Also, since we are promoting adult education, what do we do about the students who have a mother or father who is also trying to pay for college as well? For the most part, students know that tuition is going to be raised. It's just how much and

in what manner of time is it going to be raised and how much funding we get from state appropriations to minimize the amount of tuition increases. It's understood that tuition has to be increased but how much and in what manner of time and whether financial aid will be adjusted appropriately with the tuition increases and what do you do in unique situations with small universities like KSU compared to the larger institutions of WKU, UK, and UofL. Although they may be large and we may be small, our market values for fees are the same as every other university. So those are some of the concerns. Our tuition forum will be coming up soon after spring break. Our enrollment goal is to reach over 4,000. Right now we are at 2,300. The numbers are rising. We have an increase in numbers returning to KSU, increase in percentages of Kentucky students coming to KSU, and we also have an increase in the amount of students enrolled in our master's program. We're glad with some of the tuition policies that CPE has set but also we're hoping for more state appropriations since we're a little smaller than the normal university. We really want KSU to flourish because we really think it's one of the best-kept secrets in Kentucky and one of the best-kept secrets in Frankfort. It's really a jewel and we're trying to give it a shine. As far as tuition policies, I guess we're satisfied with the direction that CPE has taken and hopefully we can move progressively with the backing of appropriate state appropriations.